

AMENDED IN SENATE AUGUST 28, 2003

AMENDED IN SENATE JULY 2, 2003

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 6, 2003

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 10, 2003

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2003–04 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 1594**

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**Introduced by Committee on Veterans Affairs (Parra (Chair),  
Cohn, Kehoe, Matthews, Mullin, Nakano, Salinas, and Wiggins)  
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Cogdill, Dutra, Lowenthal,  
Mountjoy, Mullin, Runner, and Steinberg)**

February 21, 2003

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~~An act to add Section 11139.4 to the Government Code, relating to~~  
*An act to amend Section 50801.5 of the Health and Safety Code,*  
*relating to veterans.*

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1594, as amended, Committee on Veterans Affairs. Discrimination: veterans.

Existing law prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, sex, or physical or mental disability under any program or activity that is conducted, operated, or administered by the state or by any state agency, is funded directly by the state, or receives any financial assistance from the state.

*Existing law establishes the Emergency Housing and Assistance Program and requires the Department of Housing and Community Development to adopt regulations for the administration of the*

program. These regulations are required to provide, among other things, that designated local boards meet reasonable standards of nondiscrimination.

This bill would ~~specify that the provision of housing exclusively for homeless~~ provide that the above described requirements for regulations do not preclude the providers of emergency shelter or transitional housing from restricting occupancy on the basis of military veteran status if the veterans ~~who served~~ possess significant barriers to social reintegration and employment ~~is authorized by the state, and shall not be considered discrimination, notwithstanding any provision of state law or of local ordinances, as specified.~~

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature hereby finds and declares all of  
2 the following:

3 (a) It is estimated that veterans constitute nearly 30 percent of  
4 California's homeless adult population.

5 (b) According to the United States Department of Veterans  
6 Affairs, veterans are twice as likely to become homeless as  
7 nonveterans. Women veterans are four times as like as nonveteran  
8 women to become homeless.

9 (c) In its October 2002 report, "A Study on the Status of  
10 Homeless Veterans in California," the California Department of  
11 Veterans Affairs estimated that up to 55,000 veterans are homeless  
12 on any given day in California, 27,000 in Los Angeles alone.

13 (d) There are less than 2,500 shelter and transitional beds  
14 specifically available for homeless veterans in California.

15 (e) Homeless veterans experience multiple barriers to  
16 employment, including long-term homelessness, unemployment,  
17 underemployment, higher rates of hepatitis C, higher rates of adult  
18 onset diabetes, physical and mental disability, posttraumatic stress  
19 disorder, and substance abuse issues.

20 (f) Over 80 percent of homeless veterans who receive housing  
21 and support services from veteran-specific programs successfully  
22 avoid future homelessness.

23 ~~SEC. 2. Section 11139.4 is added to the Government Code, to~~  
24 ~~read:~~

1 ~~11139.4.— (a) It is the policy of this state and the purpose of this~~  
2 ~~section to facilitate and support the development and operation of~~  
3 ~~housing for homeless veterans who possess significant barriers to~~  
4 ~~social reintegration and employment due to physical and mental~~  
5 ~~disability, substance abuse, and the effects of long-term~~  
6 ~~homelessness that renders them unable to share housing with the~~  
7 ~~general homeless population.~~

8 ~~(b) The provision of housing exclusively for veterans who~~  
9 ~~possess significant barriers to social reintegration and~~  
10 ~~employment is hereby authorized and shall not be considered~~  
11 ~~unlawful discrimination, notwithstanding any other provision of~~  
12 ~~law, including, but not limited to, Sections 51, 51.2, and 51.10 of~~  
13 ~~the Civil Code, Sections 11135, 12920, and 12955, Chapter 11.5~~  
14 ~~(commencing with Section 50800) of Part 2 of Division 31 of the~~  
15 ~~Health and Safety Code, and local housing discrimination~~  
16 ~~ordinances.~~

17 ~~(c) This section shall occupy the field of regulation of housing~~  
18 ~~for veterans who possess significant barriers to social reintegration~~  
19 ~~and employment by any local public entity, including, but not~~  
20 ~~limited to, a city, county, and city and county.~~

21 ~~(d) For purposes of this section, “housing for veterans” means~~  
22 ~~emergency, transitional, or permanent housing tied to supportive~~  
23 ~~services that assist veterans who possess significant barriers to~~  
24 ~~social reintegration and employment in stabilizing their lives and~~  
25 ~~developing the skills and resources they need to make a successful~~  
26 ~~transition to independent, self-sufficient lives.~~

27 *SEC. 2. Section 50801.5 of the Health and Safety Code is*  
28 *amended to read:*

29 50801.5. (a) The department shall adopt regulations for the  
30 administration of the Emergency Housing and Assistance  
31 Program. The regulations shall govern the equitable distribution  
32 of funds in accordance with the intent and provisions of this  
33 chapter, and shall ensure that the program is administered in an  
34 effective and efficient manner. The regulations shall provide for  
35 reasonable delegation of authority to designated local boards,  
36 ensure that local priorities and criteria are reasonably designed to  
37 address the needs of homeless people, and ensure that designated  
38 local boards meet reasonable standards of inclusiveness,  
39 accountability, nondiscrimination, and integrity.

1 (b) The regulations adopted pursuant to this section shall  
2 ensure that emergency shelter and services will be provided on a  
3 first-come-first-served basis for whatever time periods are  
4 established by the shelter. No individual or household may be  
5 denied shelter or services because of an inability to pay. Nothing  
6 in this provision shall be construed to preclude a shelter from  
7 accepting payment vouchers provided through any other public or  
8 private program so long as no shelter beds are reserved beyond  
9 sundown for that purpose. Notwithstanding Section 11135 of the  
10 Government Code or any other provision of law, nothing in this  
11 section shall be construed to preclude a provider of emergency  
12 shelter or transitional housing from restricting occupancy on the  
13 basis of ~~sex or, in any of the following:~~

14 (1) *Sex.*

15 (2) *In the case of an emergency shelter or transitional housing*  
16 *offered exclusively to persons 24 years of age or younger pursuant*  
17 *to Section 11139.3 of the Government Code, on the basis of age.*  
18 ~~However,~~

19 (3) *Military veteran status, if the veterans served possess*  
20 *significant barriers to social reintegration and employment due to*  
21 *a physical or mental disability, substance abuse, or the effects of*  
22 *long-term homelessness that require specialized treatment and*  
23 *services and the provider of emergency shelter or transitional*  
24 *housing also provides the specialized treatment and services.*

25 ~~However,~~ in the case of families, providers of emergency shelter  
26 or transitional housing shall provide, to the greatest extent  
27 feasible, adequate facilities within their range of services so that  
28 all members of a family may be housed together, regardless of age  
29 and gender.

